

A new story about the amazing inhabitants of the planet Elekton...

The TRIGAN EMPIRE



Early one morning, an atmosphere craft took off from Trigan City...



It was to be a routine patrol flight to the outposts of the Trigan Empire, and the crew were Janno, the Emperor's nephew, and his friend Keren.

Set course for Rabelli, Janno, that will be our first stop.

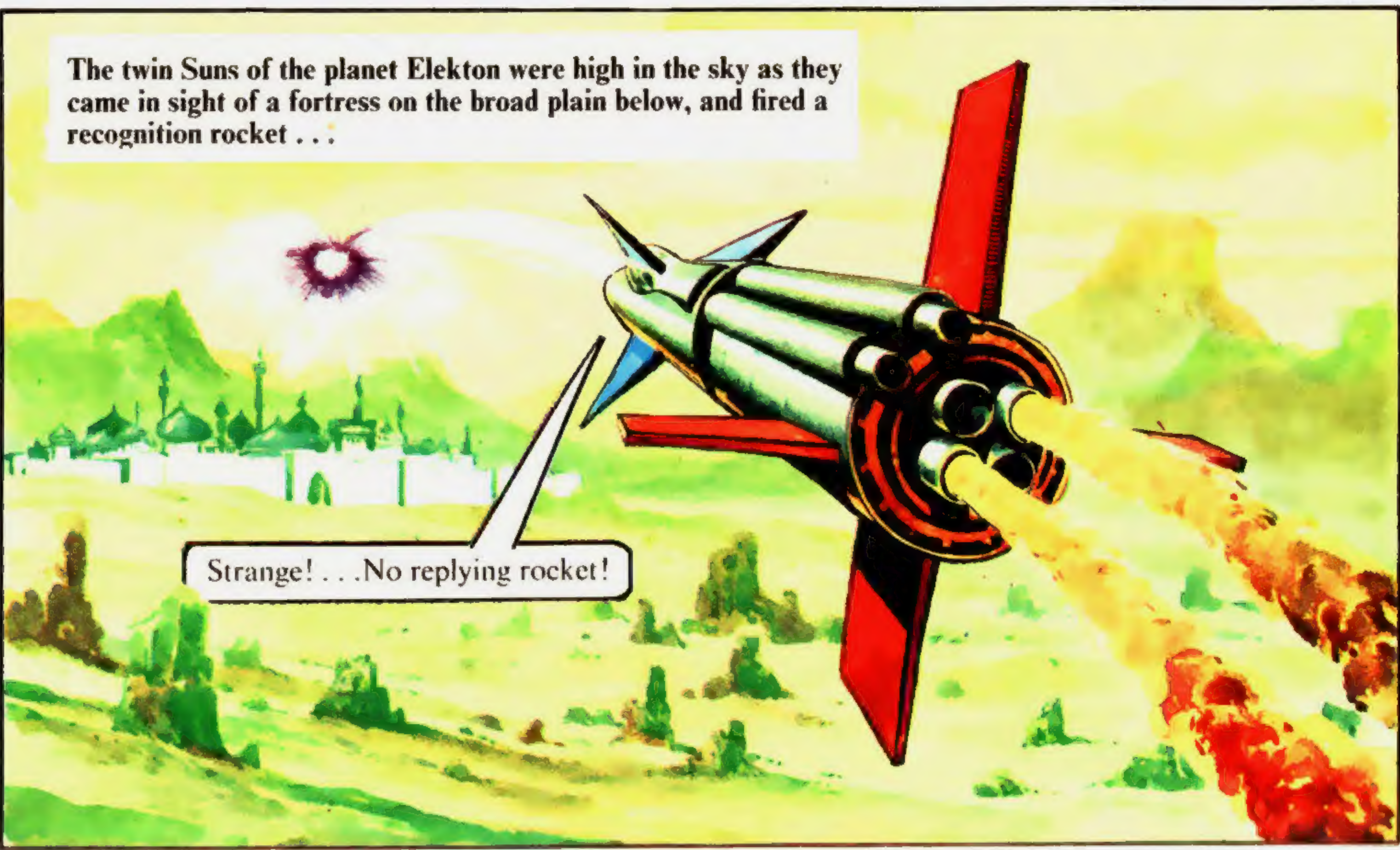
Coming on to course now. Give Rabelli a call and tell them we're on our way.



Calling Rabelli, Calling Rabelli...

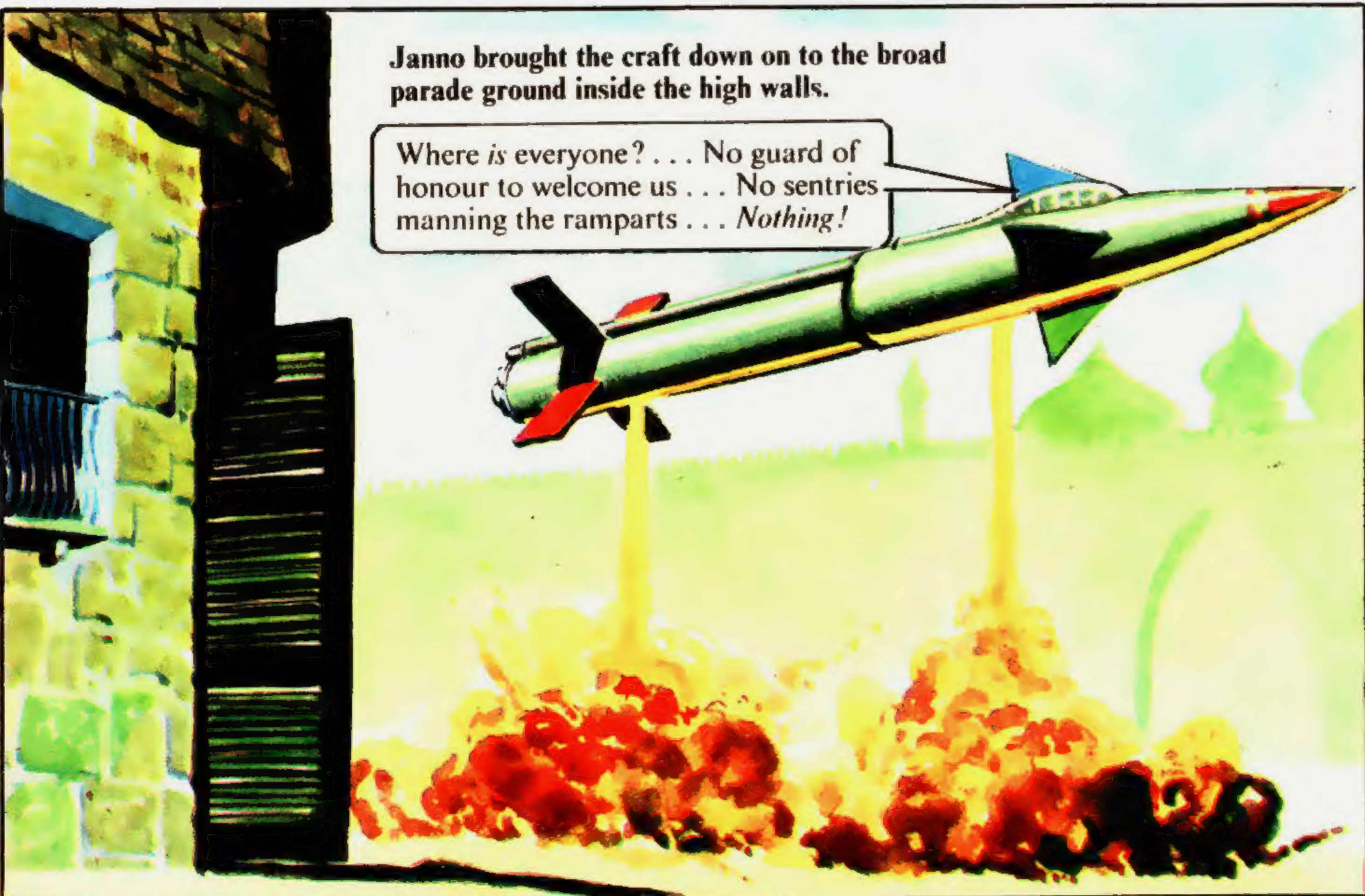
I can't get any reply from them, Janno!

Perhaps their radio has broken down... or perhaps the lazy creatures are still asleep!



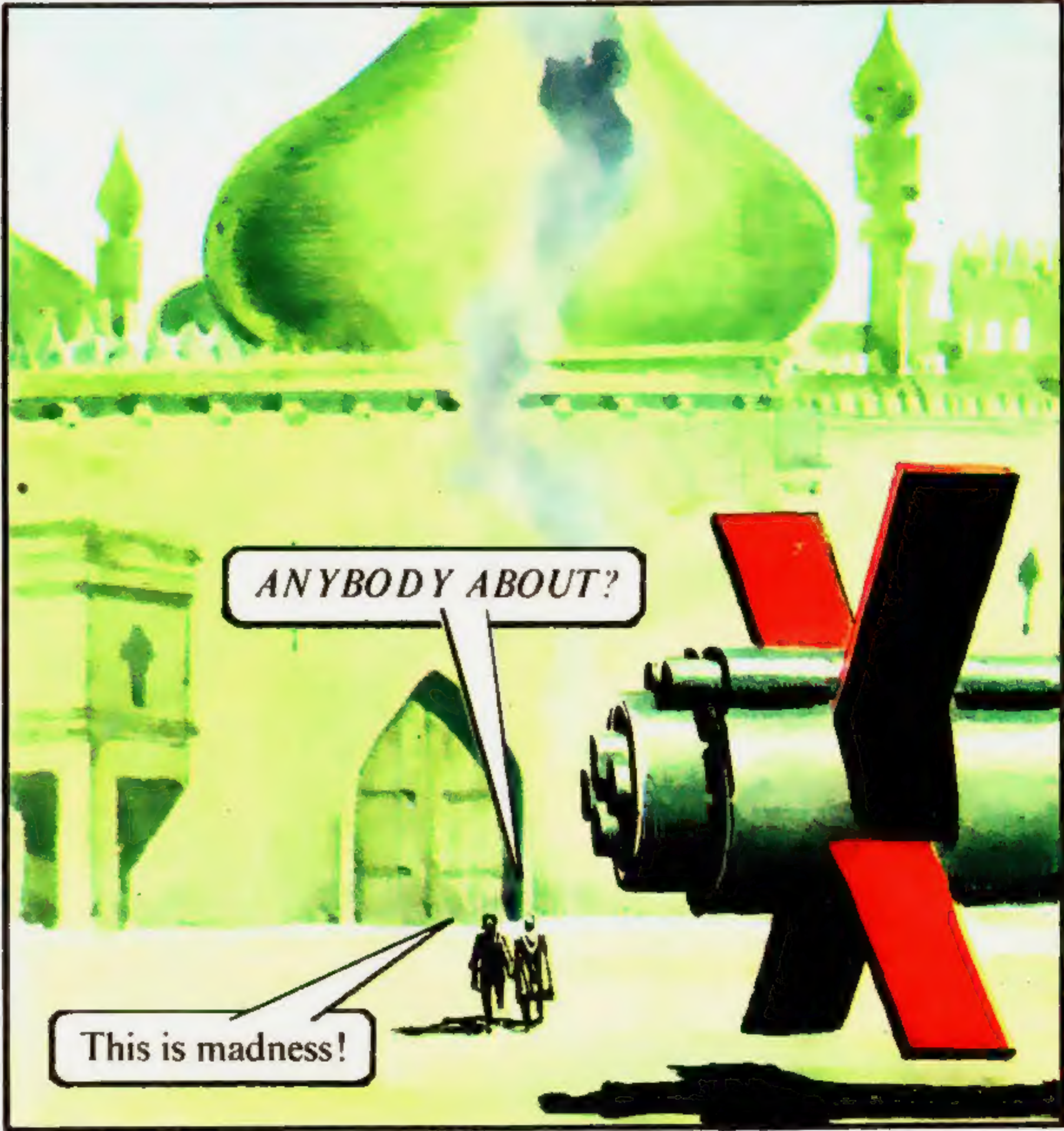
The twin Suns of the planet Elekton were high in the sky as they came in sight of a fortress on the broad plain below, and fired a recognition rocket...

Strange!... No replying rocket!



Janno brought the craft down on to the broad parade ground inside the high walls.

Where is everyone?... No guard of honour to welcome us... No sentries manning the ramparts... *Nothing!*



ANYBODY ABOUT?

This is madness!



The great eating hall was laid as if for the morning meal . . . but the places were empty!

I . . . I can't believe it!



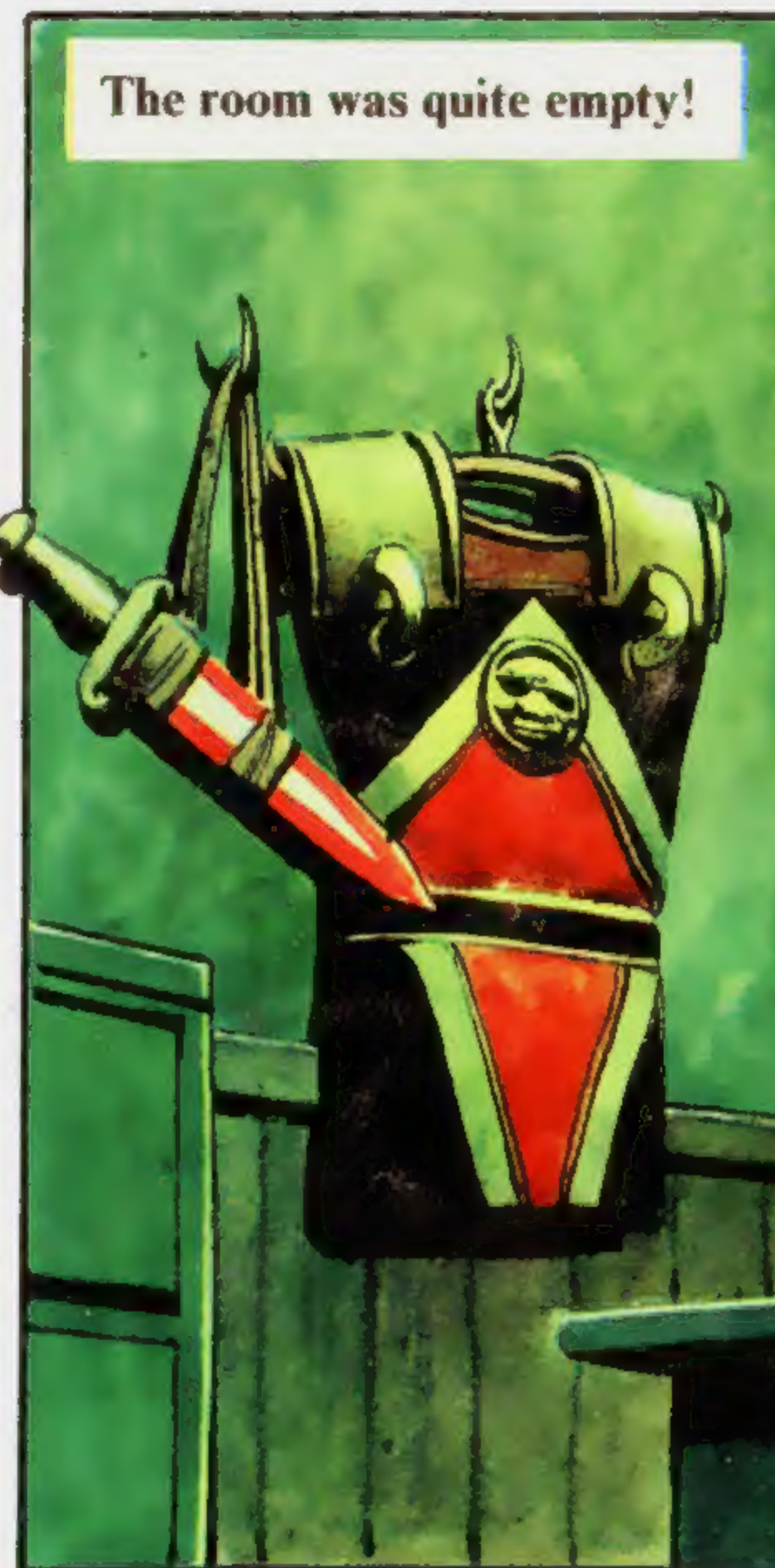
The food is still warm!



Let's split up and search every nook and cranny in the fortress. The whole garrison can't have vanished without trace!

Janno . . . I don't like it at all!

A grim premonition of evil settled over Janno as he kicked open the door of the Garrison Commander.



The room was quite empty!



But surely . . . he would not leave the fort without putting on his trappings .

And then . . . the sound of lurching, hesitant footsteps on the stairway outside.



WHO'S THERE?

He relaxed and lowered his blade to see a familiar figure in the doorway.



Oh! . . . it's you, Keren. Did you find anything?

His friend's reply . . . and the expression on his face . . . chilled the blood in Janno's veins!



WHO ARE YOU? . . . AND WHY DO YOU CALL ME KEREN?

The TRIGAN EMPIRE

Janno and his comrade Keren have arrived at one of the outposts of the Trigan Empire to find the fortress mysteriously empty . . . and then an alarming thing happens to Keren . . .

Janno stared in alarm at his friend, as his words brought an expression of suspicion and hostility to Keren's face.



Keren's blade hissed from its scabbard.

You are lying! whoever you are, you must be an enemy!



Janno ducked . . . and the sword sliced over his bent head. In that same instant, he drove his fist forward, shatteringly . . .



And, as he stood there over his fallen comrade, in the deathly silence of that empty fortress, he felt the fingers of cold fear creep up his spine.

This place is accursed! I must get away from here before the evil influence takes possession of my mind, also!



Soon . . . with Keren slumped in the seat beside him . . . he was rising into the sky above the grim-walled fortress.

When I report this fantastic business to Trigan City, they'll never believe me!

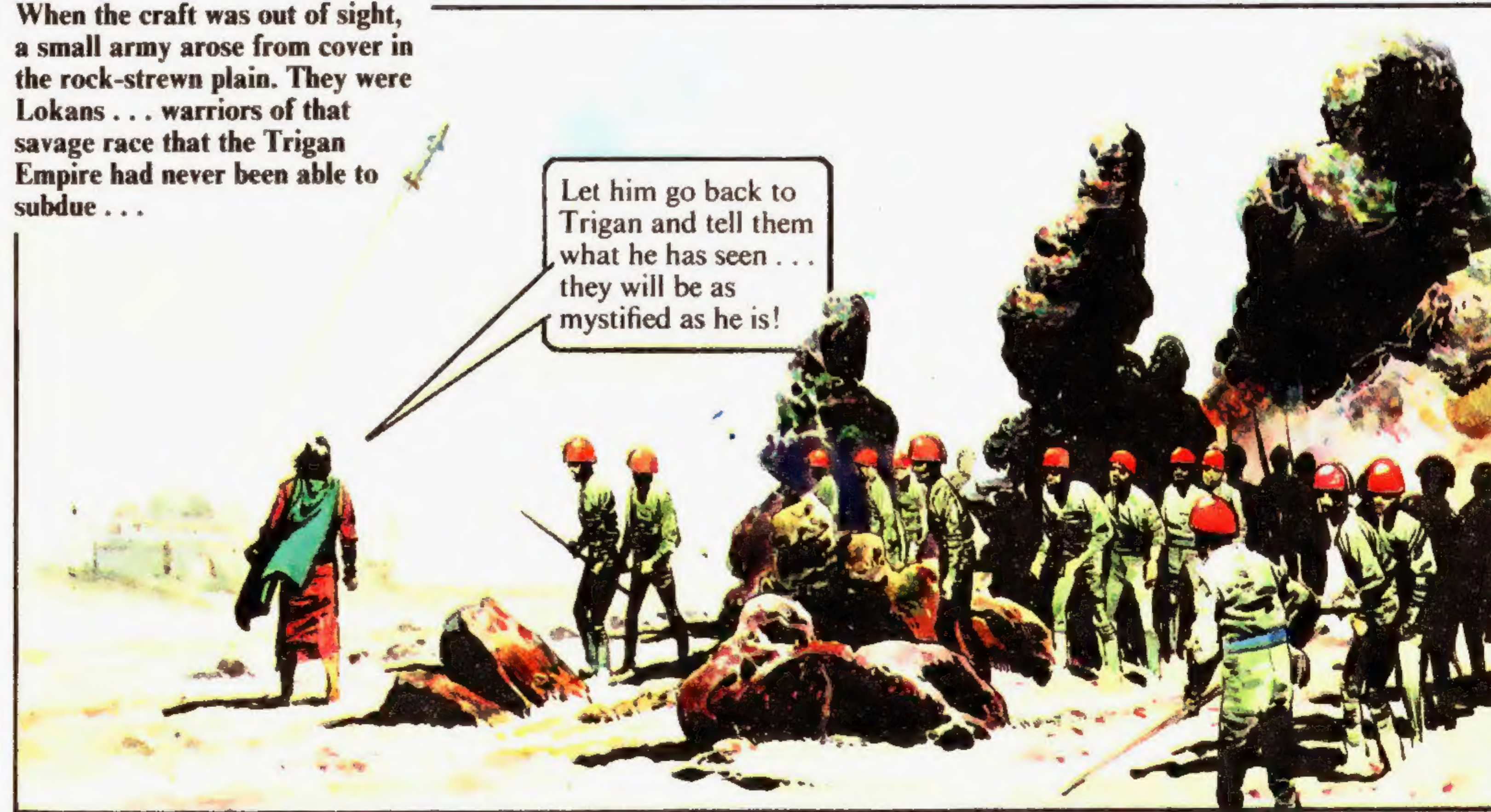


Sharp eyes watched the atmosphere craft as it set course back to Trigan City . . .



When the craft was out of sight, a small army arose from cover in the rock-strewn plain. They were Lokans . . . warriors of that savage race that the Trigan Empire had never been able to subdue . . .

Let him go back to Trigan and tell them what he has seen . . . they will be as mystified as he is!



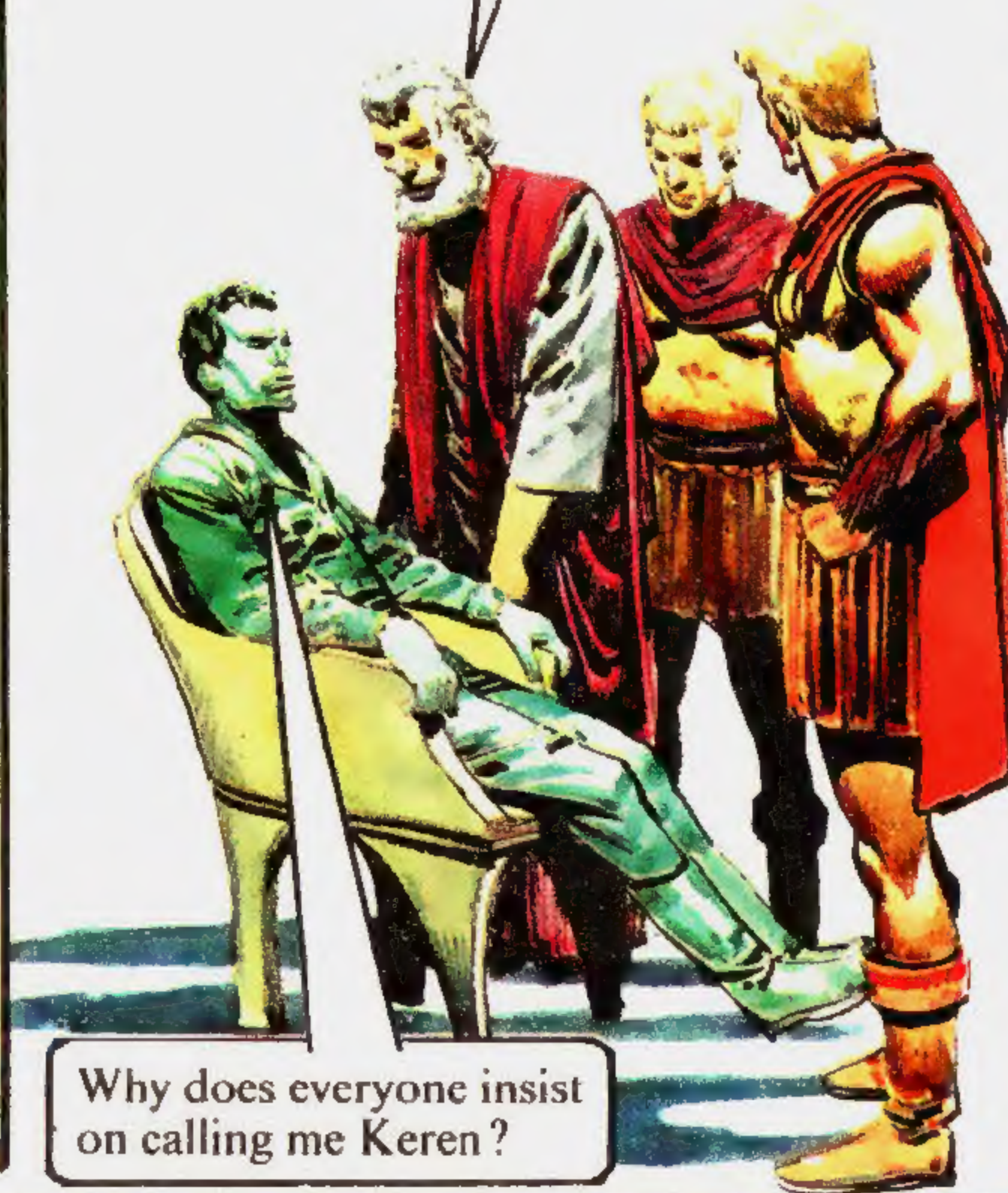
Soon Janno was bringing his craft to land in the great square of Trigan City. He had flashed a message ahead of him that he brought shocking news, and a great crowd awaited his arrival . . .



Presently, he watched with his uncle, the Emperor Trigo, as wise old Peric examined Keren, who had recovered from the blow.

So you do not remember your name, Keren?

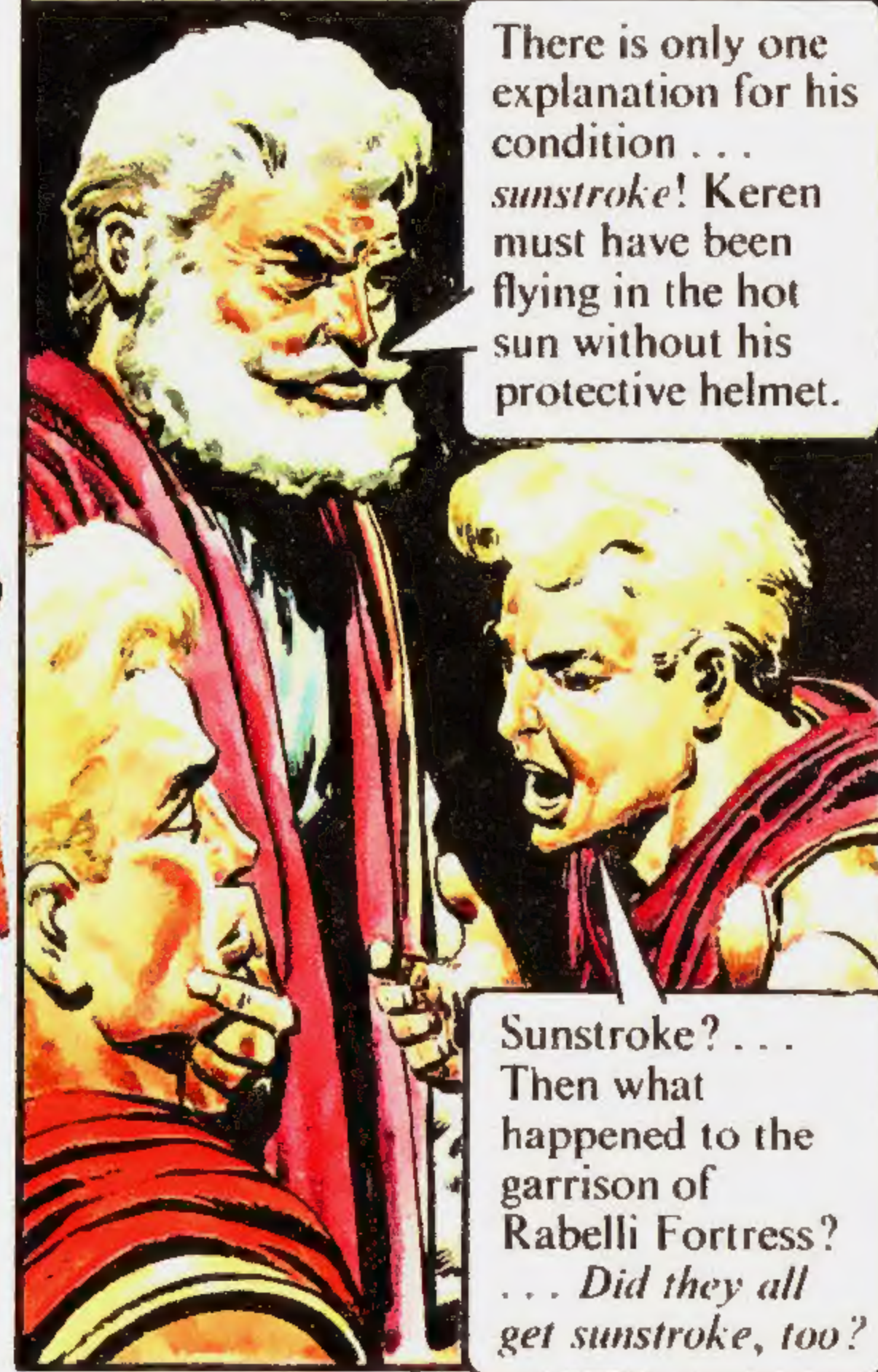
Why does everyone insist on calling me Keren?



Peric was the best physician in the empire, and he gave his opinion . . .

There is only one explanation for his condition . . . *sunstroke!* Keren must have been flying in the hot sun without his protective helmet.

Sunstroke? . . . Then what happened to the garrison of Rabelli Fortress? . . . *Did they all get sunstroke, too?*



Meanwhile, the Lokan rebels were herding a crowd of puzzled-looking men into the broad parade ground of Rabelli Fort.

We have rounded up the garrison, Vannu. They were wandering out on the plain like lost animals.

Good! . . . Bring the garrison commander to me!



A half-dressed man was dragged before the Lokan leader, Vannu.

Do you remember waking up this morning, commander . . . and perhaps calling your guard for a drink of water?

I remember . . . nothing . . .



Vannu took a phial of colourless liquid from his pouch and held it up to the sunlight.

Success, my warriors! . . . one drop of this compound in the drinking water of Rabelli Fort has turned these Trigan soldiers into mindless animals!



And now . . . *To deal with the inhabitants of Trigan City in the same manner!*

The TRIGAN EMPIRE

A band of rebel Lokans have discovered a chemical which, when added to drinking water, destroys people's memories. Young Janno brings his friend Keren back to Trigan City in this state, and old Peric decides that Keren must have sunstroke . . .

Suddenly, Janno turned on Peric in a blazing fury of impatience.

You doddering old man! Can't you see it is something more serious and sinister than sunstroke?



Trigo's voice rasped out, commandingly.

Silence, young oaf! that is no way to speak to the wisest man in the Empire!



Uncle, I will *not* be silent! I tell you . . .

Janno was Trigo's favourite nephew . . . but the Uncle was also the Emperor . . .



Guards! . . . Place Janno under close arrest till his hot blood cools down!

After Janno had been led away, Trigo turned to his old friend.

The young rascal could be right, you know. It is hardly likely that the entire garrison of Rabelli Fortress would all get sunstroke!



Then it is beyond my medical knowledge. I am baffled, Trigo!

Scowling with fury, Janno was crossing the courtyard with his guards . . .



AAAAAAH! UUUUUGH!

In a trice, he lithely leapt the high wall to freedom!

STOP! . . . I COMMAND YOU TO STOP!

Suddenly, a booted foot and an iron-hard young fist lashed out!



Dropping lightly to the ground, he raced off into the gathering dusk of the great plain, with fury blazing in his heart.

Curse them! . . . Curse my Uncle, and that old fool Peric!

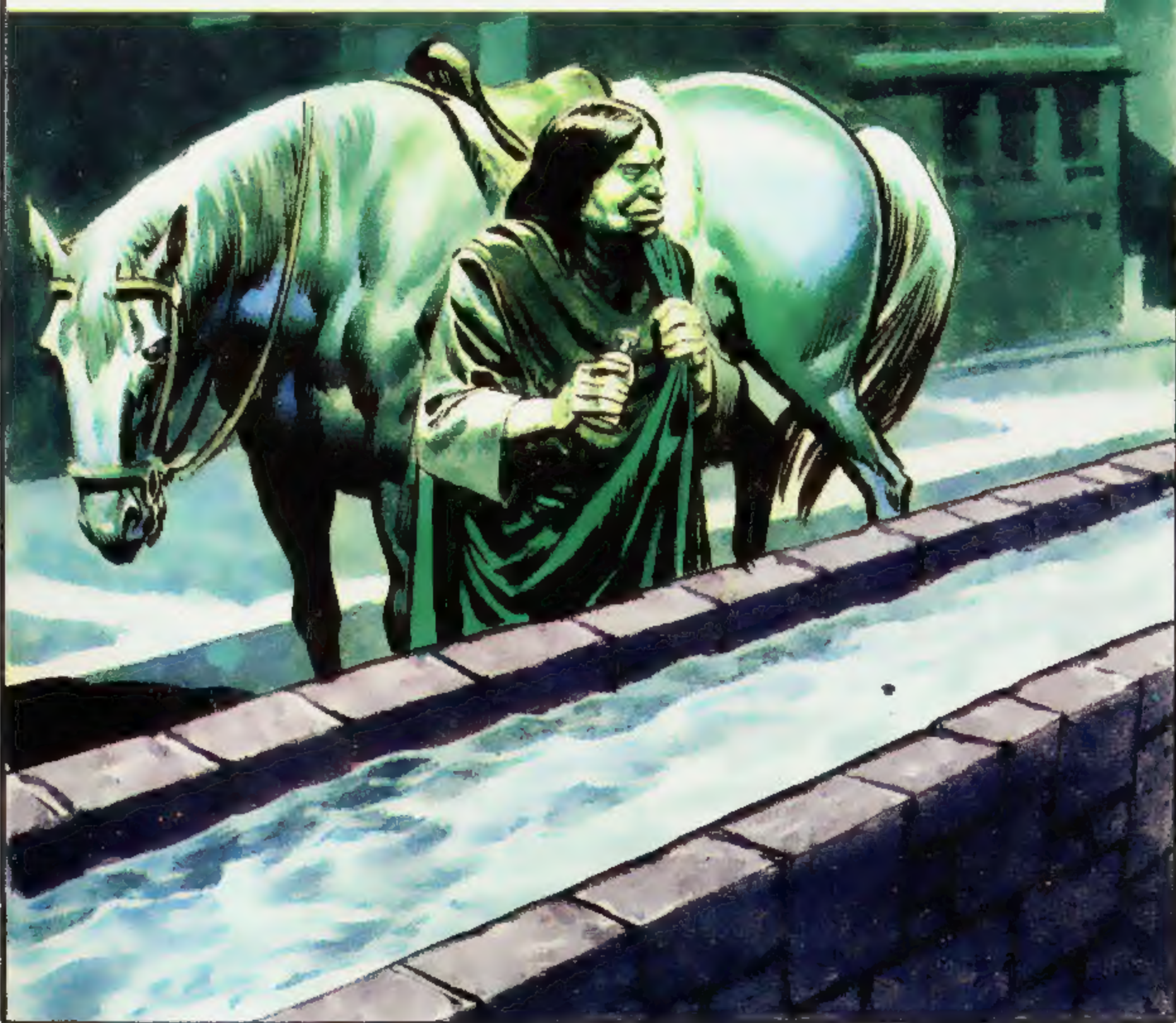


It was nearly dark when a Lokan trader rode in through the gates of the city and showed his passport as a citizen of the Trigan Empire.

Pass into the city, Lokan.



The Lokan made his way to the canal of pure spring water from the mountains which provided the city's drinking water.



He poured the contents of a small phial into the canal.

NOW . . .

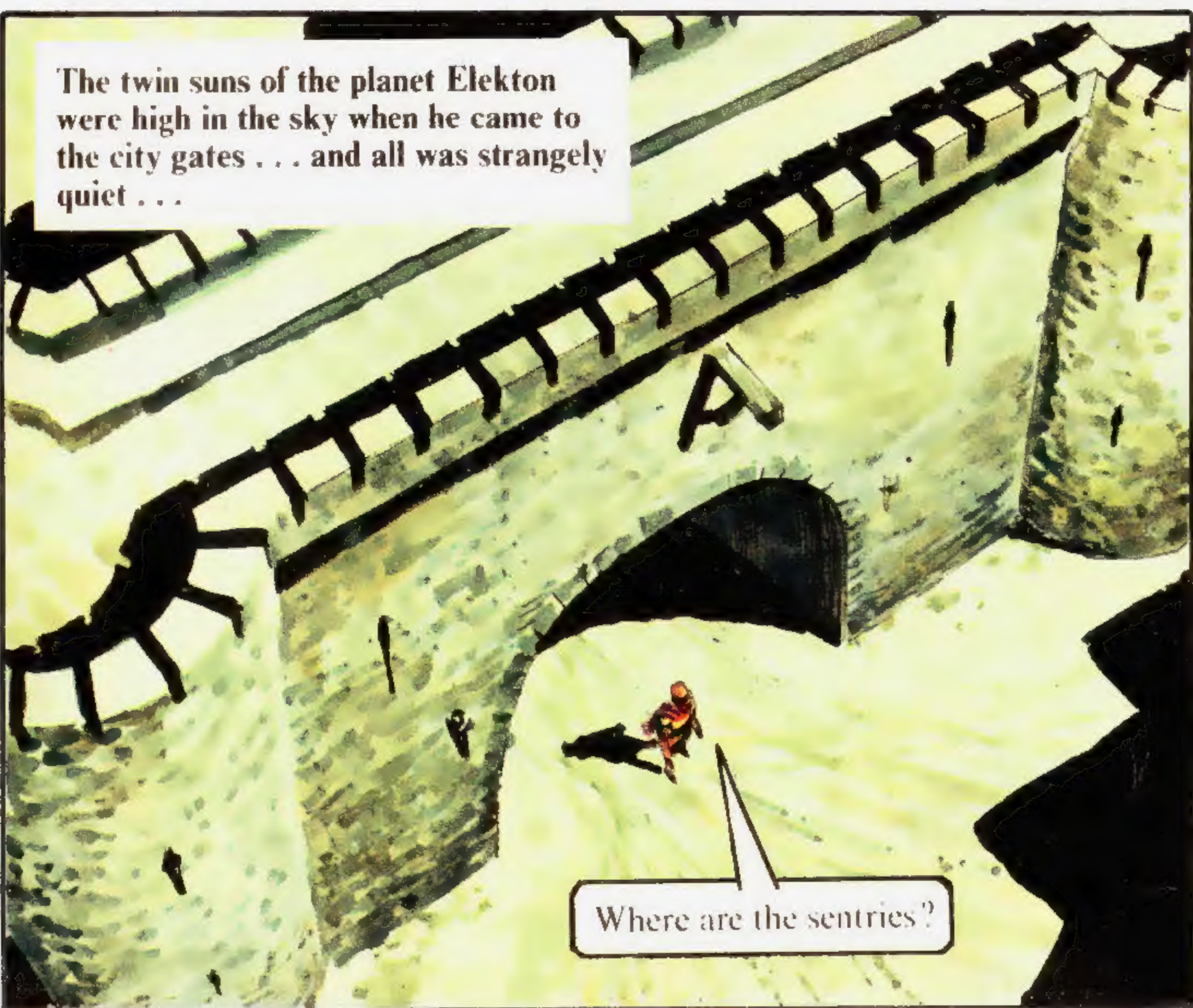


Janno slept the night on the open plain. Next morning he refreshed himself at a stream, and looked unhappily towards the towers and domes of the city, shimmering distantly in the heat haze.

I was wrong to lose my temper like that . . . the sooner I get back and apologise to Uncle Trigo and Peric the better!



The twin suns of the planet Elekton were high in the sky when he came to the city gates . . . and all was strangely quiet . . .



Where are the sentries?

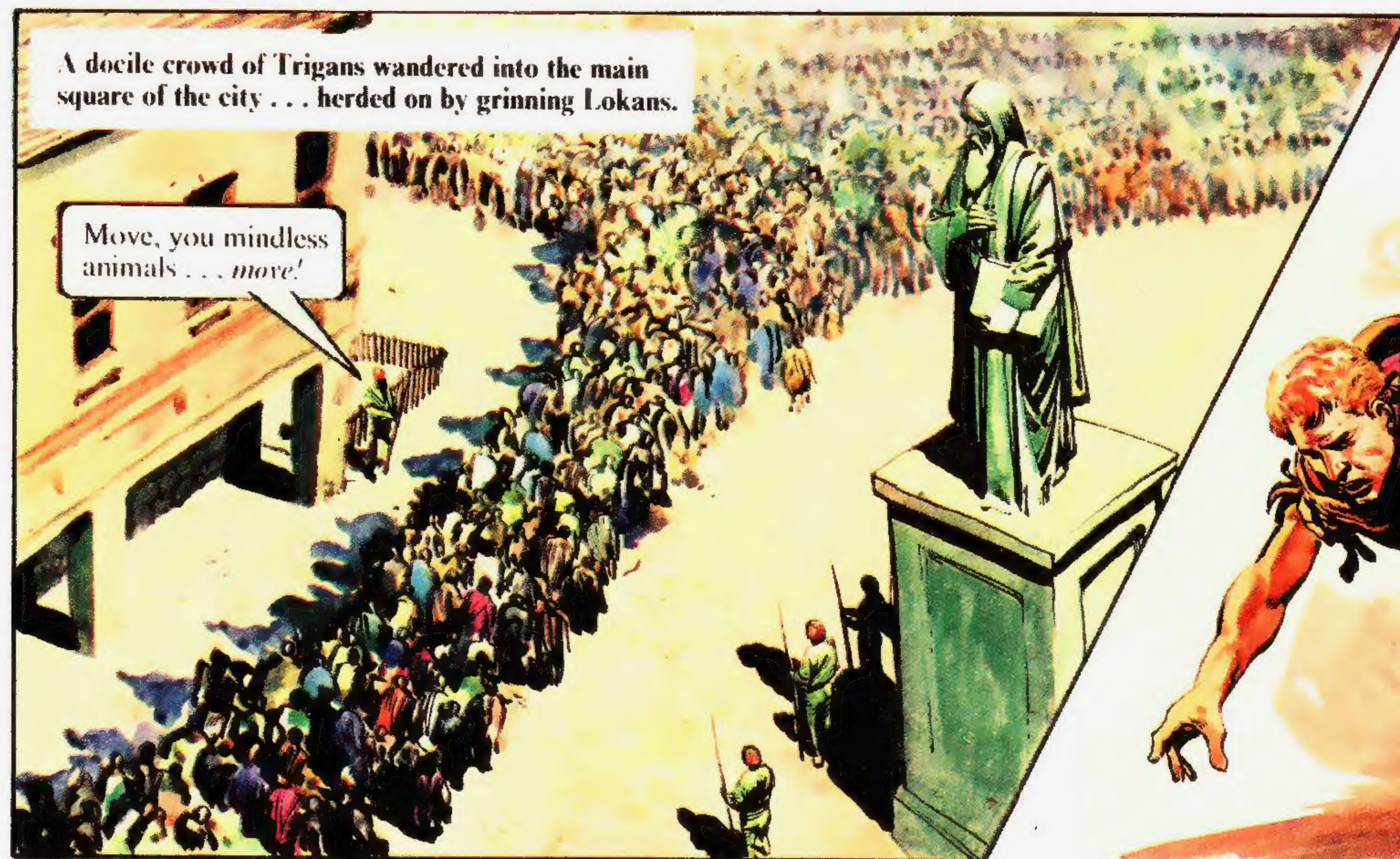
He walked into the vast square and looked about him in astonishment . . .



Where is everybody?

The TRIGAN EMPIRE

A band of rebel Lokans have added a chemical to the drinking water of Trigan city... a chemical which destroys the memory...



A docile crowd of Trigans wandered into the main square of the city... herded on by grinning Lokans.

Move, you mindless animals... move!

From the far end of the square, Janno watched the scene with alarm. Suddenly, he was knocked spinning by the shaft of a lance.



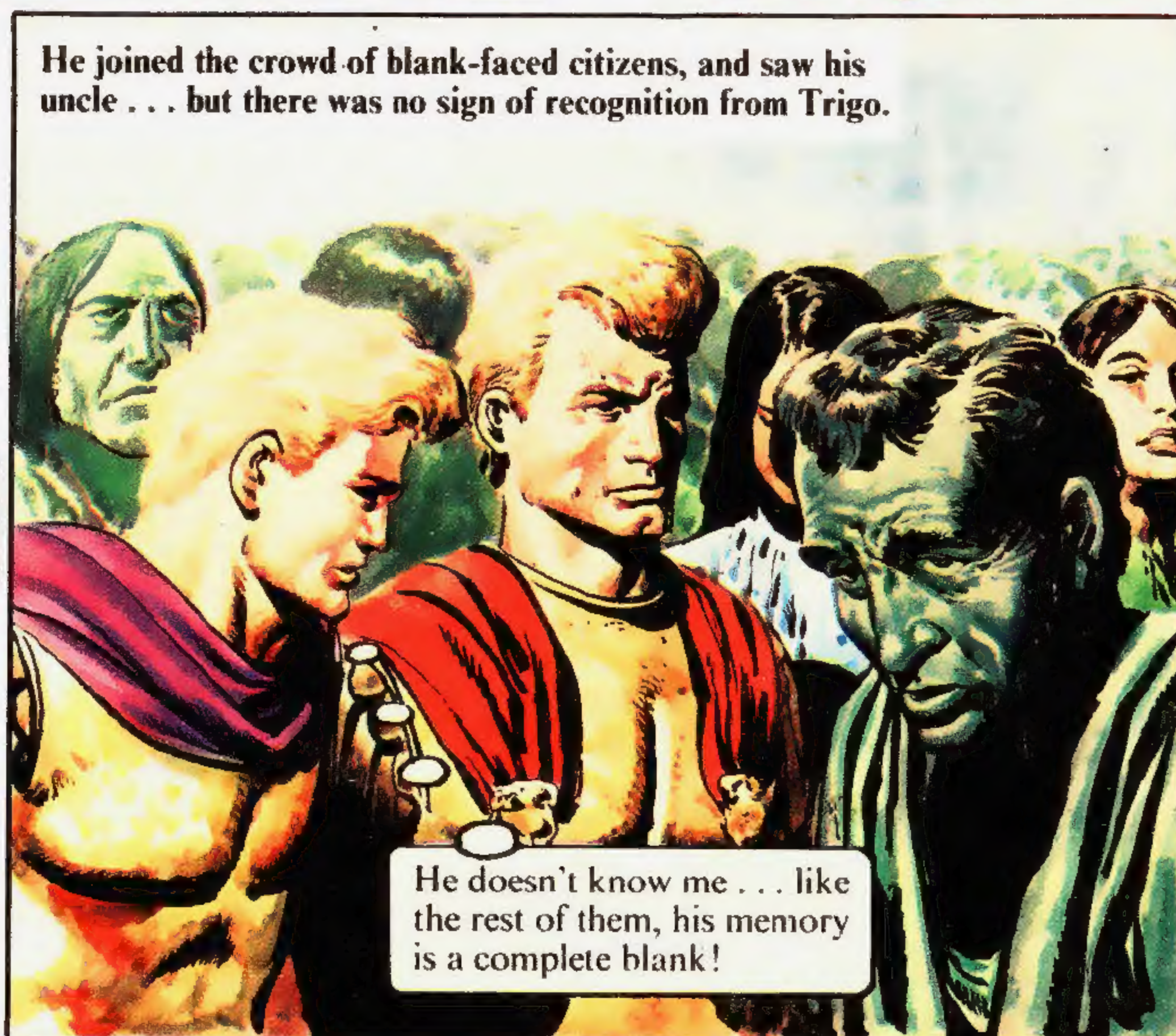
What are you doing here? Join up with the others!... Move!



The awful realisation came to Janno...

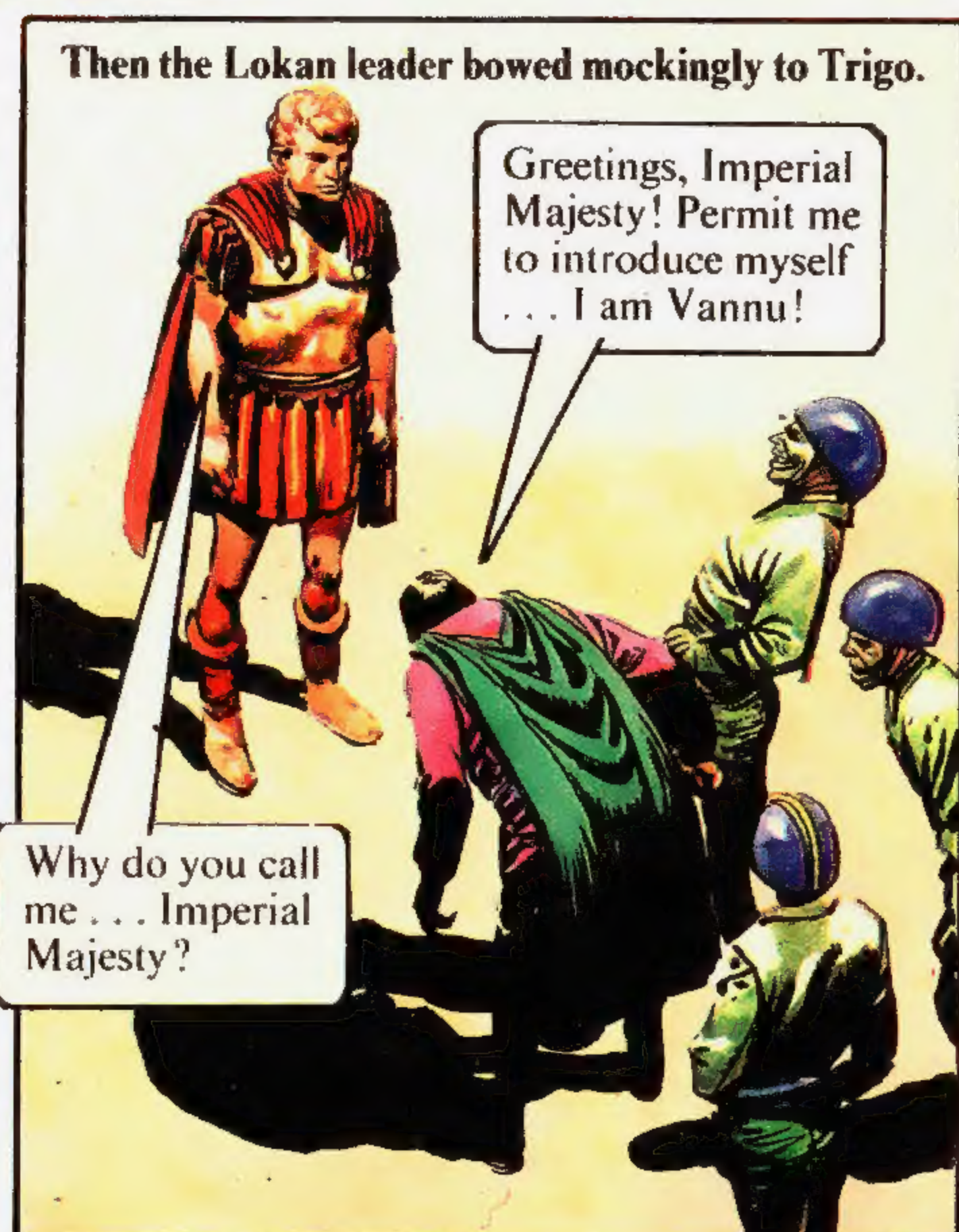
You heard me, animal!... Move!

The Lokans!... The Lokans are behind all this!



He joined the crowd of blank-faced citizens, and saw his uncle... but there was no sign of recognition from Trigo.

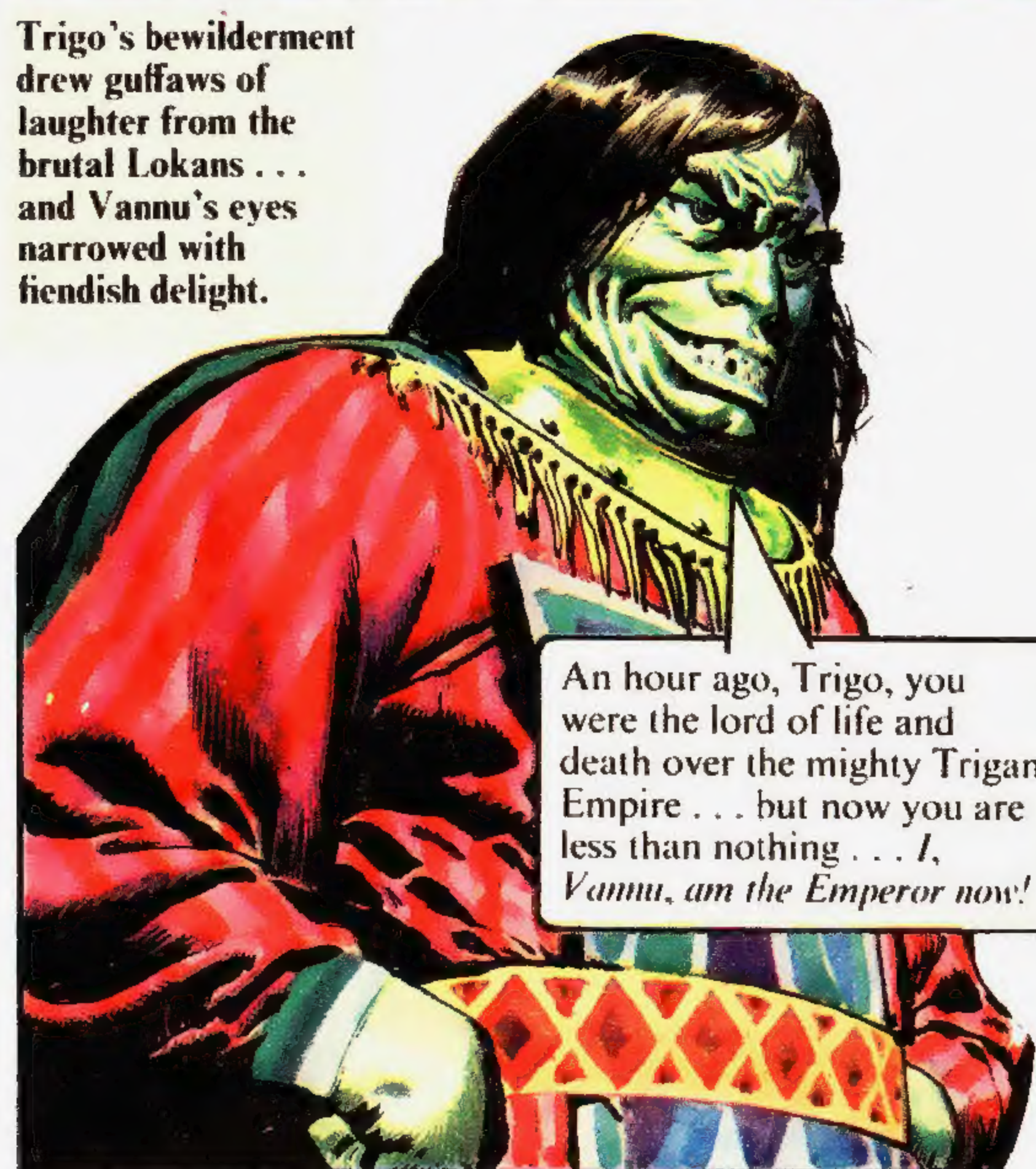
He doesn't know me... like the rest of them, his memory is a complete blank!



Then the Lokan leader bowed mockingly to Trigo.

Greetings, Imperial Majesty! Permit me to introduce myself... I am Vannu!

Why do you call me... Imperial Majesty?



Trigo's bewilderment drew guffaws of laughter from the brutal Lokans... and Vannu's eyes narrowed with fiendish delight.

An hour ago, Trigo, you were the lord of life and death over the mighty Trigan Empire... but now you are less than nothing... I, Vannu, am the Emperor now!

Then Vannu and his men discussed their plans quite openly before the Trigans... unaware that young Janno's mind was quite clear...



When the news gets out, the Trigans' allies will come swarming to avenge them!

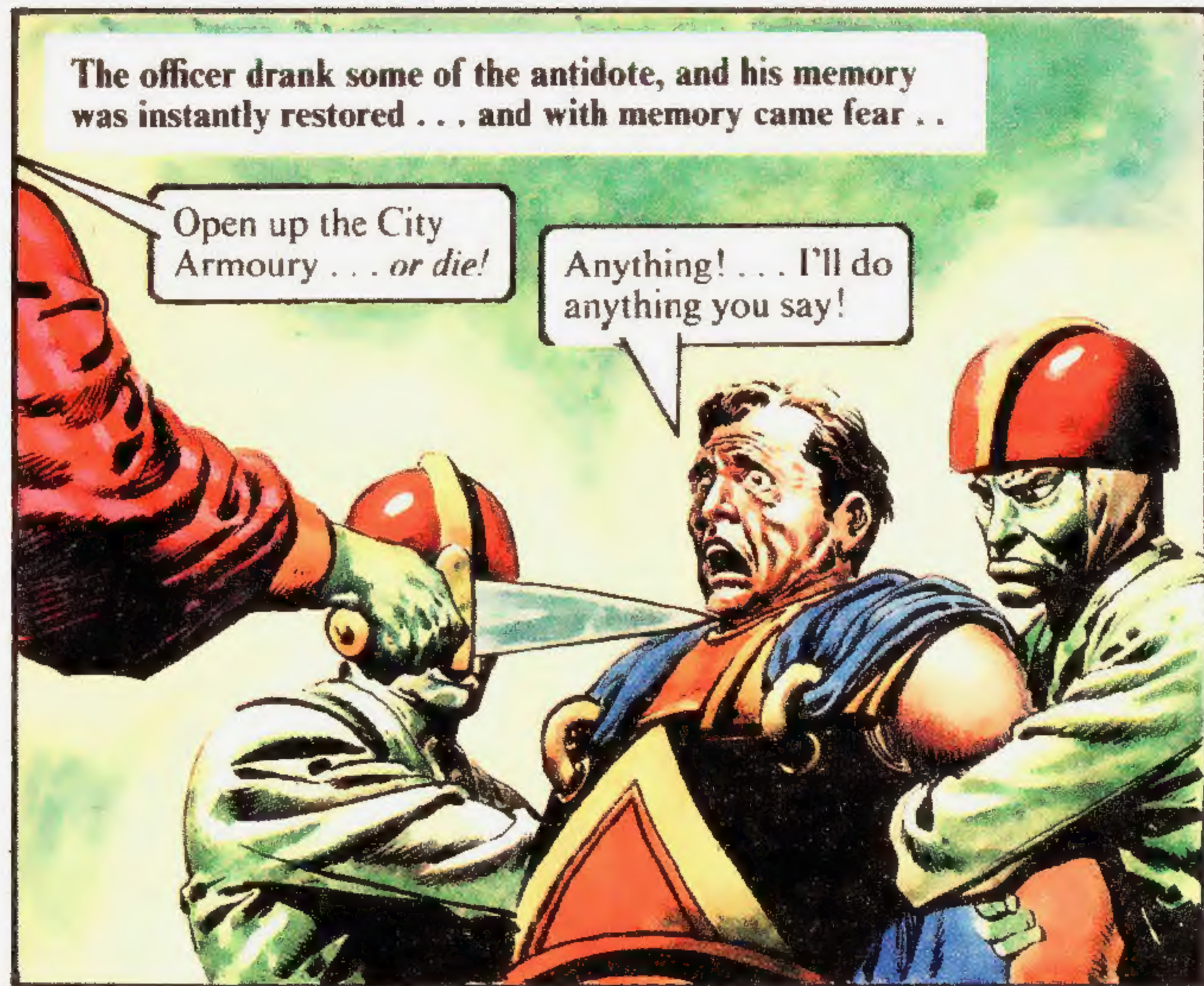
We shall need all the arms and ammunition we can lay our hands on, Vannu!

Find the City Captain! He will open up the armoury!



They dragged forth the mindless wretch who had been the City Captain, and Vannu produced a phial of red liquid...

We will restore his memory for a short while... give him a swallow of this antidote!



The day wore on, and Janno crouched with the others in the city square . . . thinking . . . thinking . . .



The TRIGAN EMPIRE

By adding a chemical to the drinking water of Trigan city, rebel Lokans have destroyed the memories of all the inhabitants, and their leader Vannu has declared himself the Trigan emperor. Janno—the only Trigan who has not drunk the contaminated water—is discovered by a Lokan sentry whilst climbing the palace wall to steal the antidote from Vannu . . .

Janno leapt towards the Lokan sentry!

They crashed together to the stone roof of the battlements . . . then followed a desperate struggle for the possession of the weapon . . .

With a cry of triumph—the Lokan leapt to his feet with the gun in his hand . . . he backed away . . .

Now, Trigan animal . . . you will have much to explain to my master, Vannu!

. . . and fell over the ramparts to the square below!

EEEEEEEEEEGH!

The man's last despairing cry roused his comrades. Dark figures came running from all sides . . .

What was that?

They must not find me here!

Janno was back in the square amongst his own people by the time Vannu joined the throng of Lokans surrounding their stricken comrade.

We don't know how it happened, Vannu!

It must have been an accident. We have no enemies in the city . . . only the mindless Trigans!

Janno was in despair . . .

I've failed! . . . No use trying again to get the antidote tonight. The whole garrison is awake!

In the nightmare days that followed, Janno stole uncontaminated water from the Lokans . . . and bided his time for a chance to lay hands on the antidote.

I dare not take any risks . . . I am the only Trigan left with a memory and a will!

It was not long before the news of the capture of Trigan city was all over the planet Elekton. It penetrated the dense jungle of Daveli . . . where King Imbala swore a mighty oath.



We will march to avenge our friends and allies the Trigans! No food shall pass my lips till I Imbala have driven the evil Lokans from Trigan city!

The hordes of Imbala marched from their jungle fastness in ranks for war.



On the evening of the second day, they came in sight of the towers and domes of the great city.

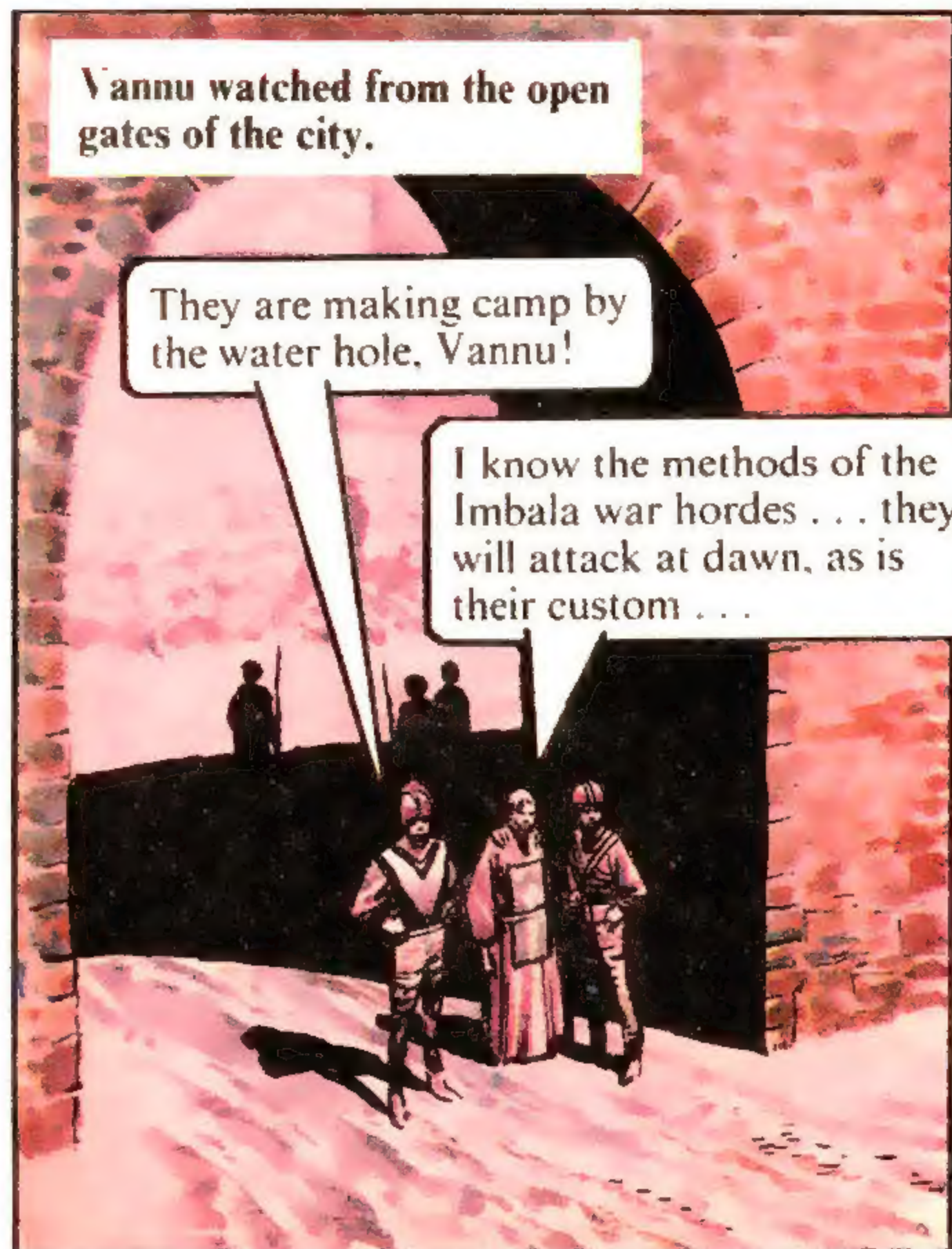


WE ATTACK AT DAWN!

Vannu watched from the open gates of the city.

They are making camp by the water hole, Vannu!

I know the methods of the Imbala war hordes . . . they will attack at dawn, as is their custom . . .



He took out a phial of clear liquid.

. . . or so they think! When it is dark, you will steal out to their camp and pour *this* into the water hole!

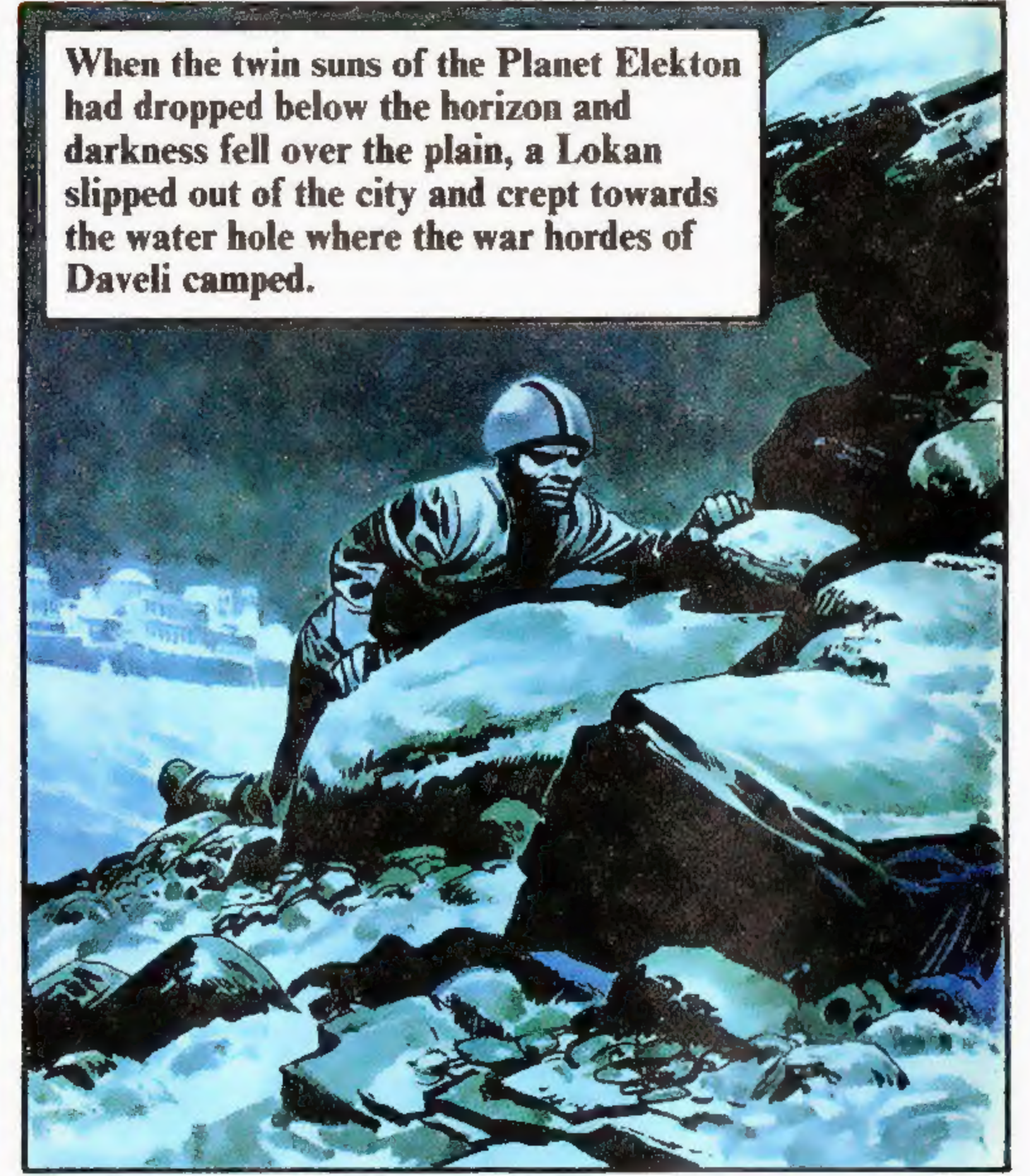
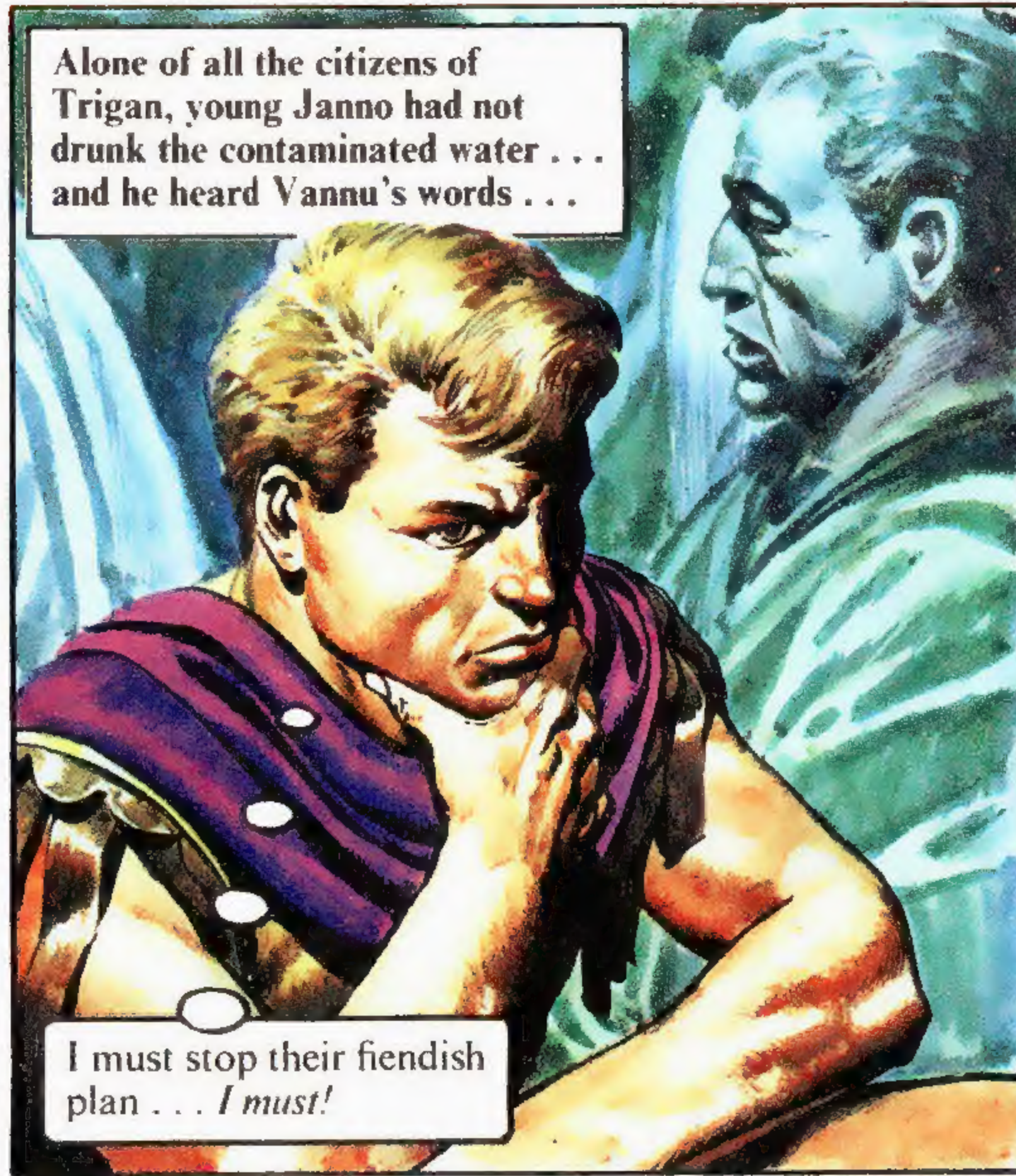
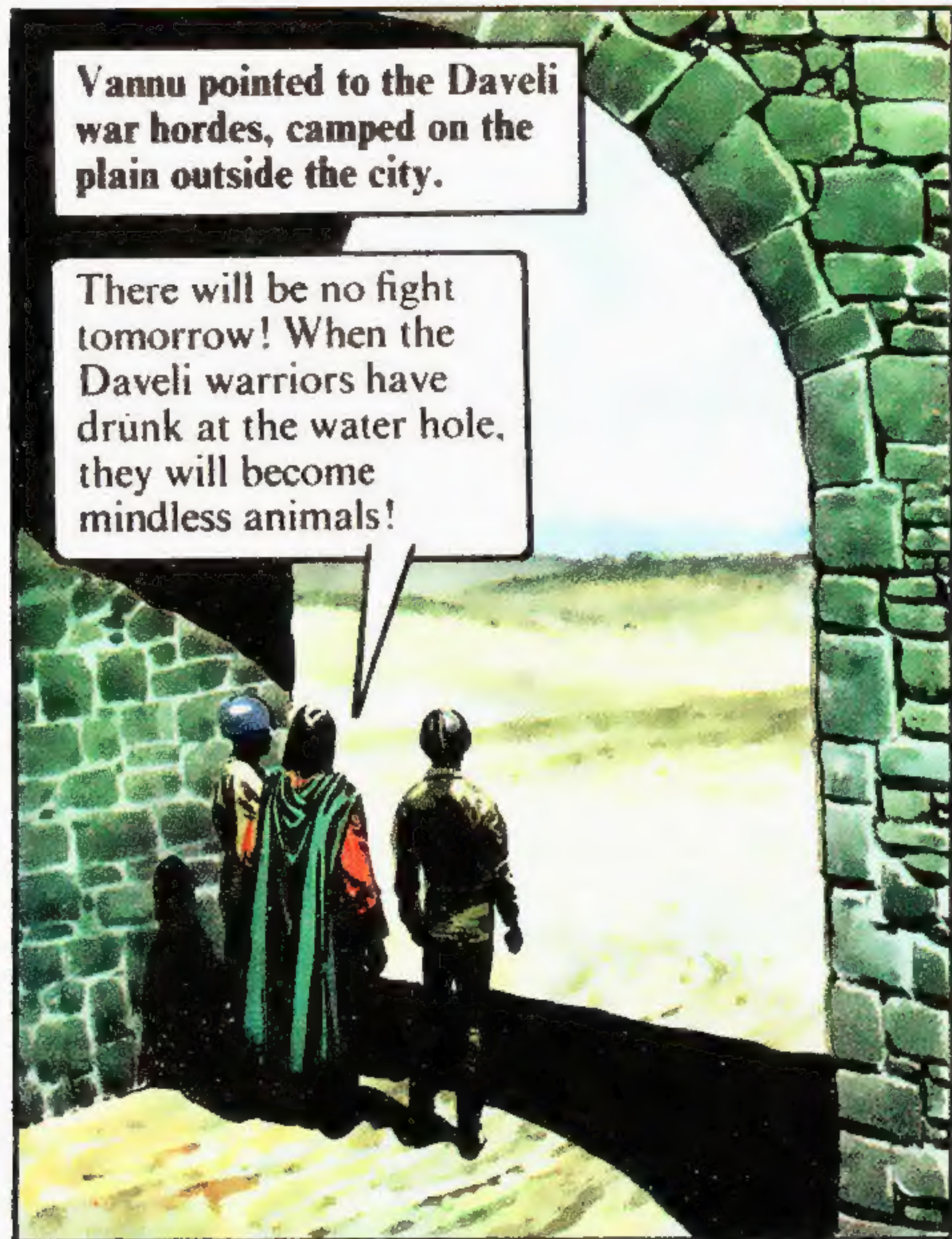


They will rise at dawn and drink to refresh themselves for the attack . . . and when the suns of Elekton are high in the sky, I shall not only be the Emperor of Trigan, but the King of Imbala!

Next Week: Vannu's evil plans receive a set back

The TRIGAN EMPIRE

By adding a chemical to the drinking water of Trigan City, a band of rebel Lokans led by Vannu have destroyed the memories of the citizens . . . now Vannu plans to do the same to the war hordes of Daveli, who have come to avenge their Trigan Allies . . .



Greatly outnumbered, the Lokans fell back before the shattering shock of impact . . . and Vannu yelled above the turmoil.

Lokans! . . . Form a circle! . . . Form a circle!

The surviving Lokans obeyed their leader. Soon they stood shoulder-to-shoulder in a circle. And then King Imbala of Daveli called to Vannu . . .

I call upon you to surrender! Do so, and your lives will be spared!

Never! We fight to the last man!

Vannu was a scoundrel, but he had all the animal-like courage of his race.

They drank from their water bottles . . . and almost immediately a strange change came over them!

Where . . . Where am I?

Who are these men with me?

One last drink to refresh us for the fight, Lokans . . . and then we show these barbarians how to die!

King Imbala approached the Lokans . . . and with him was Janno.

Janno! If you had not prevented that Lokan from contaminating the water hole last night, this would have happened to us! But it was a master-stroke of yours to put the chemical intended for us in *their* water supply!

Janno reached inside the tunic of the unresisting Lokan leader and took out a phial of red liquid.

And now . . . with this antidote . . . we will restore the minds of the people of Trigan!

Soon after, the Emperor Trigo and his subjects were themselves again. They remembered nothing of what had happened during the time that their minds were enslaved . . .

Imbala, old friend . . . but . . . what are *you* doing in Trigan?

It is a long story, Trigo. Janno shall have the pleasure of telling it to you . . .